

Tips for Better Customer Service

1. Smile at your customers/guests. A smile costs nothing but gives much. It takes but a moment and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. A smile fosters goodwill in business.
2. Say something nice to everyone right away. Your greeting tells customers who you are and how you feel, and they are evaluating what kind of service they can expect from you.
3. Recommend someplace else as they are leaving your establishment. If you know they are going to eat, recommend your favorite place and tell them why. If they are still shopping, send them to your neighbor.

Stay Informed!

Follow us on [Twitter](#) for Downtown emergency alerts (only): DowntownVentura ... And befriend us on [Facebook](#) for interesting updates about the neighborhood.

Want more news more often? Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter on our Web site: www.DowntownVentura.org



P.O. Box 1414
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www.downtownventura.org

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BUSINESS NEWS

Welcome to the following businesses who have joined our thriving Downtown!

Chill
27 S. Chestnut Street
Frozen yogurt & coffee
667-8043

EcoLogic Life
56 S. Oak Street
Green interior design
648-2626

The Dume Room
456 E. Main Street
Restaurant and bar
643-6300



Tradition
518 Main Street
Men's streetwear clothing
643-8805

Heavenly Couture
379 E. Main Street
Women's Clothing
641-1909

Rocket Fizz
105, #100 S. Oak Street
Specialty soda and candy
641-1222

Search on for Executive Director

In March, Downtown Ventura Partners is launching a nationwide search for a new executive director.

DVO/DVP board member Cheryl Heitmann chairs the search committee. The board is looking for someone with a proven track record in business recruitment and marketing as well as the ability to establish strong personal relationships with merchants, tenants, property owners and volunteers.

More information is available at: downtownventura.org.



Downtown Ventura Organization Newsletter

◆◆◆
Winter 2010

SGI selected to Manage Clean & Safe Program

One of the most important aspects of the Downtown Ventura Partnership's work is the Clean & Safe program. The importance of this program translates into a sizeable amount of budget and time being spent keeping the downtown area safe as well as clean and attractive for residents, businesses and visitors to downtown Ventura.



SGI Program Manager Bret Webber and employees Michael Sandoval and Juan Rodriquez are ready to help keep downtown Ventura tidier and safer.

nally or to hire an outside firm to accomplish our goals. After reviewing proposals and discussing their merits at length, the board decided to award a contract to SGI (Service Group Incorporated) to provide services to downtown Ventura.

SGI provides such services to 20 cities throughout the U.S. including downtown San Diego, San Jose and Santa Cruz. Their experience, training and systems are top notch and will greatly add to what is already in place. Our goal is to make downtown Ventura the most desirable destination to live, work and visit in the region.

SGI is hiring local employees to do everything - sweep and pressure-wash sidewalks, remove trash, improve landscape, interface with local law enforcement on safety issues and act as local ambassadors on our city's streets. These uniformed employees will be visually noticeable downtown starting in March.

Learn more about them at www.servicegroupinc.com.

Incubator Project Brings High Tech to Ventura

The City of Ventura, in an effort to attract high-value small business to the area, has developed Ventura Ventures Technology Center. The project was unveiled last month at an event at the top of the Crowne Plaza Hotel to introduce V2TC to the business community. Because of our proximity to UC Santa Barbara to the north and Amgen to the south, Ventura is ideally situated to attract high-tech business to the area.

"It's where the digital coast meets the technology corridor," said Mayor Bill Fulton to 250 business people at the kick-off event.

The city partnered with DEJ Frontier, a venture capital fund, to develop the concept and attract tenants to the incubator. At present there are 10 start-ups in the high-tech business incubator, including several that have experienced, high-tech



Lottay.com is one of the new techie occupants of the Ventura Ventures Technology Center.

start-up leaders. The hope is that these start-up companies, which were attracted to the incubator at the beginning, will grow and move out into the local community. In doing so, Ventura is helping to

increase jobs and interest in our city as a great place to do business.

Here are a few of the businesses involved:

Geodelic creates mobile experiences to discover the information most relevant to a user's location.

Lottay.com is a Web site that allows users to give money through PayPal as a meaningful and fun gift.

Search Mechanix fixes broken search engine optimization and pay-per-click programs or can create them correctly from start-up.

The Trade Desk is an early-stage company that provides a platform for media buying that improves the process through the use of data.

Transition IT Now provides Internet technology solutions, marketing and administrative systems for businesses.

DVO Committees Working for You

Design Committee

The Design Committee coordinated participation from more than 75 businesses/building owners for the white outline building lights. Our hope is that these lights can be left in place year round. It is a big, bright addition to our downtown.

On December 5, 2009 more than 600 visitors enjoyed a night of singing and festivities downtown. More than 200 carolers walked along Main Street for our annual Tree Lighting at the historic San Buenaventura Mission, followed by refreshments from Jonathan's, Busy Bee Cafe, Savory Cafe, Candlelight, Watermark, and the Crowne Plaza. Santa showed up in a shiny red fire truck and handed out more than 750 candy canes. The event was a big success, bringing many new people into the downtown area. We're hoping to make it even bigger next year. Many merchants dressed up their windows for the holidays, and a 12-Days-of-Christmas event was organized with 12 merchants creating everything from A Partridge in a Pear Tree to 12 Drummers Drumming.

Looking into the first quarter of 2010, we are planning the installation of the publication cabinets or news rack condos which will allow a pleasant and more uniform look for the various publications that distribute downtown. We are also working toward installing banner poles on either side of California Street at Santa Clara to announce upcoming events in our downtown. The design and restaurant committees are working on a DVO/DVP summer fundraiser featuring collaboration between downtown businesses and restaurants along with local wineries.

Economic Restructuring Committee

The Economic Restructuring Committee has set aggressive goals to help support existing businesses and attract new ones to downtown. Our Downtown Works program continues to focus on attracting new office users who will shop and eat downtown. We recently sponsored the Ventura Ventures Technology Center launch party at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

After years of complaints about trash, blocking alleys and security concerns, the ER Committee successfully lobbied the City Council to put new requirements on thrift store operations. New rules should be in place by late spring, and our Hospitality Ambassadors (see accompanying story) will assist Code Enforcement to keep the alleys safe and clean. The Ventura Housing Authority presented plans to build 37 low-income housing units and administrative office space on the vacant property at Thompson and Oak.

Promotions Committee

The Promotions Committee produced an advertising schedule for local radio and print media to promote the holiday season in two ways. The first flight promoted the downtown tree lighting and caroling event on December 5. The second message encouraged people to shop and dine downtown throughout the holiday season.

With more than 50 retail stores and as many restaurants and nightspots, downtown Ventura has it all.

Organization Committee

The DVO kicked off the first of its monthly Welcome Walks in October. The goal of the Welcome Walks are to visit new businesses downtown, welcome them to the neighborhood, and provide them with DVO material such as contact information and update them on DVO-related community events.

◆ We held a successful

business seminar in November with customer service as a focus. The session was lead by Seana-Marie Sesma of Ace-ana Promotions and Wendy Gillett of Extraordinary Customer Service.com.

◆ Special thanks to our Fourth Quarter Third Thursday Hosts: Anacapa Brewing Company, The Wine Rack and Café Fiore.

◆ A Holiday Volunteer Recognition Party was held in December at Cafe Fiore to thank the many volunteers who have helped the organization throughout the year.

Clean & Safe Committee

The newly formed Clean & Safe Committee has met twice this past quarter to assist the board in determining the different ways our budget could be best utilized, in terms of cleanliness and safety in the downtown.

Two alternatives were proposed: The first was a comprehensive, self-administered plan to perform these tasks "in-house," using local vendors and workers. The second was to utilize the services of an out-of-area, third-party vendor who specializes in clean and safe programs.

After exhaustive discussion, the board determined that the third-party vendor will be the way we address these issues going forward, and Service Group Incorporated (SGI) would be handling all Clean & Safe issues. See accompanying story in this issue.



Carolers and other festivities brought energy to downtown during the holidays.

Sign Regulations Clearly Stated

Downtown has many businesses that are using portable A-frame style signs to advertise on the street. It's important to know and adhere to the rules governing such signs, so here are the requirements according to city ordinance # 24.110.1410:



A sign that is self-supporting, designed to be moveable, and not structurally attached to the ground, a building, a structure or another sign. Portable signs include, but are not limited to, sandwich board signs, A-frame signs and other similar signs.

Required Standards:

1. The sign shall be made of substantial materials such as wood or metal. Cardboard or paper signs are not permitted.
2. Only one portable sign is allowed.
3. The sign shall be stored indoors after hours of operation.
4. The sign is limited to no more than (10) square feet in area.
5. The sign shall be placed in front of the business identified on the sign.
6. The sign shall be three (3) feet away from any fire hydrant.
7. The sign shall not obstruct access to the building.
8. The sign shall not obstruct access to a building's internal fire protection equipment or utility controls (electric, gas, water).
9. Signs in the public right of way shall maintain a minimum of four feet of clearance to any curbside, street furniture or above-ground utilities.
10. This permit is valid as long as the establishment is in business at this address.
11. Only one sign per building is allowed.

If you have any questions, please call the city planning department at 805-654-7894.

WAV Project a New Creative Hub

Downtown's newest residential development was completed in December when the WAV (Working Artists Ventura) project saw dozens of artists move into 54 work/live space units.

WAV represents the vanguard of innovative and sustainable cultural facilities. The project is a \$57 million, state-of-the-art community, designed for artists and creative businesses. Located in the cultural district of downtown, WAV offers affordable living and working space for more than 100 artists of every kind — painters, sculptors, dancers, poets, musicians, filmmakers and more.

An additional 15 units are designed to provide permanent supportive housing for recently homeless families and individuals from across Ventura County.

Thirteen market-rate, for-sale spaces are available, offering ocean or mountain views. The net proceeds from the sale of these units will provide nearly \$3 million in cross-subsidy to the affordable spaces.

WAV also promotes small business development. Retail space for such tenants as galleries, coffeehouses, art supply stores and jazz clubs on the bottom floor will provide jobs for area residents, promote small businesses, and contribute to the vitality of this emerging area.

WAV is a very green building and is the first LEED Certified affordable housing project in Ventura County, and only the second in the State of California. WAV will harness enough solar energy to actually provide electricity to the regional grid. LEED-designed buildings are healthier for the inhabitants and the environment, while conserving our precious natural resources.



The first residents of WAV have moved in and are making themselves at home.